"The Council considered the letter of Shri R.L. Meena, Law Secretary, addressed to the Chairman, Bar Council of India requesting the Bar Council of India to send comments in the matter to enable the Department of Legal Affairs to offer its comments to the Department of Commerce. After consideration, the Bar Council of India has reiterated its earlier view on the issue of not permitting foreign lawyers and law firms in the country. The Bar Council of India once again strongly opposes the entry of foreign lawyers and its strong views are to be made known to the Ministry of Law and Justice and Company affairs. In this view, the Council has no other views to offer on the subject."

The Government has so far not taken any dissimilar view.

Plan to Introduce Tonnage Tax

1963. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM: Will the Minister of SHIPPING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any plans to introduce tonnage tax; and

(b) if so, by when and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING (SHRI DILIP KUMAR MANSUKHLAL GANDHI): (a) and (b) While Government is committed to the establishment of a facilitative fiscal environment (including the introduction of tonnage tax) in which the shipping industry can thrive, no definite time-frame can be indicated since the entire process has to pass through different stages of consideration and examination including formal legislation.

Project to link the Barak Valley and adjoining Hill Districts

1964. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of SHIPPING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government has decided to link the Barak Valley and the adjoining Hill districts to the National Water-way;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the techno-economic feasibility study of the project has been completed;

(d) if so, by when the work on the project is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING (SHRI DILIP KUMAR MANSUKHLAL GANDHI): (a) to (d) No, Sir However, a Techno-Economic Study for development of inland water transport in River Barak has been conducted. Work on the project has to be preceded by declaration of the said waterway as a National Waterway.

Growth of Port Infrastructure

1965. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of SHIPPING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there are a number of new players who are developing small, but efficient Ports which are eating into the business of over 12 big Government owned Ports;

(b) whether, inspite of Government's readiness to invest in their big ports to improve their efficiency, competition is stiff leading to a haphazard development of our Port infrastructure; and

(c) if so, the steps being taken by Government to resolve this problem and ensure a coordinated growth of our Port infrastructure?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING (SHRI DILIP KUMAR MANSUKHLAL GANDHI): (a) It is a fact that a number of new ports other than major ports have been developed during the last few years and their share of the total traffic handling in India has gone up. However, the traffic in major ports, which fall within the ambit of the Central Government, is also steadily increasing.

(b) It is true that there is increased competition in the port sector. This is a healthy development and has not led to haphazard development.

(c) Does not arise.

Tonnage capacity of major ports

1966. MISS MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minister of SHIPPING be pleased to state:

(a) the total intalled tonnage capacity of the major Ports in the Country;